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ABSTRACT

New guidelines for administrator preparation drafted for the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) are presented, and, though subject to further AASA scrutiny, they are suggested for inclusion in all administrator preparation programs. The basis for the guidelines was a literature search, personal interviews with staff at five professional organizations and institutions, and administrator preparation course content at 75 colleges and universities. Six critical themes emerging from the analysis--changing demographics, unstable economic structure, new technologies, labor market opportunities, preserving cultural diversity and human rights, and changing family structures--are viewed as challenges administrators must be prepared to meet. Leadership outcome goals, competencies and skills, and delivery components are presented to prepare educational leaders to manage these unprecedented problems. (MLF)

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Administrator Preparation Guidelines:

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BACKGROUND

While serving as the 1982 AASA Professor, one of my major activities was to draft new guidelines for administrator preparation. The AASA staff and many of my colleagues felt that the existing document on preparation guidelines was five years old and no longer adequate for influencing preparation programs and activities. The AASA staff asked me to tackle the assignment and work with appropriate committees, and professional groups to collect the best thinking on the topic. The first draft has been presented to the Committee for the Advancement of School Administration (CASA), the Higher Educational Advisory Committee (HEAC), and many educational leaders for reactions and suggestions. A revised document was presented in September to CASA and HEAC and eventually the guidelines emanating from this document will become the AASA position for the preparation of school administrators.

A. Objective

The major objective of the paper is to suggest a common set of administrator preparation guidelines which should be included in all administrator preparation programs. The close scrutiny by the reactors and other Division A participants will further refine or alter the proposed guidelines. The final document could have a major impact on the current administrator preparation standards of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education and other accrediting agencies.

B. Perspective

Among the most vital concerns of leading professors of educational administration and practitioners is the preparation of school leaders. In spite of the

complexities of establishing a common set of administrator preparation guidelines that will assure consensus among professors and practitioners, major common elements have emerged. The theory base for the paper was drawn from the literature and from preparation program descriptions of all sizes and types to analyze the degree of emphasis on common preparation elements.

The literature is replete with reports and laundry lists about preparation standards for school administrators. Many high quality monographs, papers, articles, and books on preparation have been produced for leading professional organizations, [i.e., University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Division A, the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), and the American Association of School Administrators.] One example of the literature was a paper on the topic given by Nancy Pitner, of the University of Oregon, at the 1982 AERA meeting in New York City. Her paper titled "Administrative Training Programs: State of the Art" traced the history and highlighted the state of confusion in the profession about standards for quality preparation. Another effort is a set of monographs, one of which was co-authored by this writer, that was completed in April, 1981 and is now being published by UCEA. These monographs titled "Preparing Leaders to Manage and Anticipate the Future," explored the trends and challenges of the future and the administrative skills necessary for success. NASSP, NIE, and the Carnegie Foundation, along with others, have undertaken long term projects aimed at the preparation of school administrators.

Leading practitioners and professors have basic notions about the nature and scope of quality preparation programs. The problem is stating and reaching general consensus on the standards that our profession can embrace and attain.

While it is true that discrete skills are extremely important to enable administrators to succeed in different administrative specialities whether in the central office or as principal or assistant principal at the building level, most all administrative roles require a common set of administrative competencies and skills.

Thus, the intent of this paper is to suggest the most vital goals, competencies and delivery components that administrator preparation programs should include in order to prepare leaders for America's schools.

C. & D. Methods and/or Techniques and Data Source

The primary method uses a literature search and personal interviews with executive directors and researchers at the National Offices of AASA, NASSP, NAESP, ASCD, and NIE. This material was critiqued by employing content analyses and matrix techniques to determine the emphasis placed on preparation components. The secondary method was to analyze the program and course content described in brochures, bulletins, and accreditation documents for seventy-five college and university preparation programs. These two major sources were the basis for the proposed guidelines.

E. Results and/or Conclusions/Point of View

The results of the investigation led me to believe that administrator preparation programs must be upgraded to prepare school leaders to manage and anticipate a future of uncertainties. Six critical themes surfaced in the literature and were emphasized in the UCEA monograph, Part II titled Critical Challenges for Leaders Who Anticipate and Manage the Future by Hoyle and McMurrin. These six critical themes will continue to present severe challenge for school leaders and extend and support the issues and challenges identified in other studies reviewed. It is understood that any or all of these critical themes may be replaced by other key issues in the future.

1. Changing demographics reflects a major increase in the percentage of adults in the society who do not have school age children or who are retired, a continuing decline in elementary and secondary school enrollments in most districts, and regional population shifts. These factors together contribute to the erosion of the traditional support base for public education.

2. The unstable economic structure is reflected in a deterioration in the United States' international market and economic position and intensified unemployment rates. This undermines tax revenues at all levels of government, including school finance.

3. Adopting the new technologies is a challenge because the explosion of electronic information gathering processes and transmitting technologies has already replaced many forms of routine mental and physical tasks and manipulations.

4. Related to these new technologies are labor market opportunities requiring sophisticated training and the ability to assimilate and manipulate complex information and material. The number of low and semi-skilled jobs will continue to decline.

5. The challenge of preserving cultural diversity and human rights is made more complex by the changing make-up of the population. In addition, groups traditionally viewed as minorities may become a majority, placing an even greater obligation on the schools to respond to their social, economic, and educational needs.

6. Changing family structures are reflected in both the nuclear and extended family, precipitated by high rates of residential mobility, divorce, and female employment; acceptance of alternative life styles; and declines in teenage supervision and custodial care; all creating new roles for schools.

The implication of these six themes are so extensive that they may be difficult for educational leaders to comprehend and manage. Consequently, those responsible for administrator preparation programs must take the initiative in preparing educational leaders to manage problems which are unprecedented in our history. If school administrators are to lead successful schools in the future, the following goals, competencies and skills, and delivery components should be included in their preparation program.

LEADERSHIP OUTCOME GOALS

Successful administrator preparation programs must prepare school leaders who understand the theoretical foundations and demonstrate the application of each of the specific performance goal areas listed below. School leaders of tomorrow must:

1. Establish and maintain a positive and open learning environment to facilitate the motivation and social integration of students and staff

2. Build strong local, state, and national support for education.

3. Develop and deliver an effective curriculum which expands the definitions of literacy, competency, and cultural integration to include advanced technologies, problem solving, critical thinking skills, and cultural enrichment for all students.

4. Develop and implement effective models/modes of instructional delivery that best utilize time, staff, advanced technologies, community resources, and financial means to maximize student outcomes.

5. Create programs of continuous improvement and evaluation of both staff and program effectiveness as keys to student learning and development.

6. Skillfully manage system operations and facilities to enhance student learning.

7. Conduct and utilize research as a basis of problem solving and program planning of all kinds.

COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS FOR GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENT

All students completing preparation programs should be able to demonstrate the competencies related to each of these seven goals. These competencies and their underlying skills and understandings include:

1. Designing, implementing, and evaluating a school climate improvement program which utilizes mutual staff and student efforts to formulate and attain school goals. This competency includes the following:

   a. human relations, organizational development, and leadership skills;
   b. collaborative goal setting ard action planning;
   c. organizational and personal planning and time management;
   d. participative management, variations in staffing;
   e. climate assessment methods and skills;
   f. improving the quality of relationships among staff and students to enhance learning;
   g. multi-cultural and ethnic understanding;
   h. group process, interpersonal communication, and motivation skills.

2. Understanding political theory and applying political skills in building local, state, and national support for education. This competency includes the following:

   a. school/community public relations, coalition building, and related public service activities;
   b. politics of school governance and operations;
   c. political strategies to pass bond, tax, and other referenda;
   d. lobbying, negotiating, collective bargaining, power, policy development, and policy maintenance skills to assure successful educational programs;
   e. communicating and projecting an articulate position for education;
   f. role and function of mass media in shaping and forming opinions;
   g. conflict mediation and the skills to accept and cope with inherent controversies.

3. Developing a systematic school curriculum that assures both extensive cultural enrichment activities and mastery of fundamental as well as progressively more complex skills required in advanced problem solving, creative, and technological activities. This competency includes the following:

   a. planning/futures methods to anticipate occupational trends and their educational implications;
   b. taxonomies of instructional objectives and validation procedures for curricular units/sequences;
   c. theories of cognitive development and the sequencing/structuring of curricula;

d. development/application of valid and reliable performance indicators for instructional outcomes;

e. utilization of computers and other technologies as instructional aids;

f. development/utilization of available cultural resources.

4. Planning and implementing an instructional management system which includes learning objectives, curriculum design, and instructional strategies and techniques that facilitate high levels of achievement. This competency includes the following:

a. curriculum design and instructional delivery strategies;

b. instructional and motivational psychology;

c. alternative methods of monitoring and evaluating student achievement;

d. management of change to enhance the mastery of educational goals;

e. computer management applications to the instructional program;

f. utilization of instructional time and resources;

g. cost-effectiveness and program budgeting.

5. Designing staff development and evaluation systems to enhance effectiveness of educational personnel. This competency includes the following:

a. system and staff needs assessment to identify areas for concentrated staff development and new personnel resource allocation;

b. utilization of system and staff evaluation data in personnel policy and decision-making;

c. appraisal of the effectiveness of staff development programming in terms of professional performance;

d. using clinical supervision as a staff improvement and evaluation strategy;

e. assessment of individual and institutional sources of stress and methods of reducing them.

6. Allocating human, material, and financial resources to efficiently and accountably assure successful student learning. This competency includes the following:

a. facilities planning, maintenance, and operation;

b. financial planning and cash flow management;

c. personnel administration;

d. pupil personnel services and categorical programs;

e. legal concepts, regulations, and codes for school operation;

f. analytical techniques of management.

7. Conducting research and utilizing research findings in decision making to improve long range planning, school operations, and student learning. This competency includes the following:

a. research designs and methods including gathering, analyzing and interpreting data;

b. descriptive and inferential statistics;

c. evaluation and planning models and methods;

d. selection, administration, and interpretation of evaluation instruments.

PROGRAM DELIVERY COMPONENTS

Management System Components

Preparation programs for educational administrators should reflect contemporary management concepts and technologies. Thus each preparation program should have:

1. Diagnosis Capability: Assessment procedures should be planned to diagnose the entry level competencies of graduate students in each competency and in basic communications skills. The faculty and advisory committee of practicing administrators should clarify the competencies, construct the performance indicators, and determine the minimum mastery levels for program admission, counseling, placement, and completion.

2. Design Capability: Programs should be designed to assure that students master all competencies. Reality oriented instructional situations emphasizing group activity, simulation, management games, assessment centers, and related activities and materials are encouraged.

3. Instructional Capability: Quality teaching by a full-time qualified faculty is vital. In addition, the use of quality adjunct professors, especially practicing administrators, for regular and short courses and for team teaching certain classes will promote the theory/practice union.

4. Resource Capability: The complete resources of the university should be utilized to assure program quality. Carefully selected lectures, seminars, courses, and professors in other disciplines are vital ingredients in administrator preparation. The number of outside courses from other divisions and departments should be a faculty decision based on the best possible learning experiences for each student.

5. Program Evaluation Capability: Continuous scrutiny of program design, delivery, and effectiveness is essential to establishing and monitoring program quality. Programs should employ assessment mechanisms that use systematically derived performance information on both current students and graduates as the basis of modifying program content and methods.

Content Components

Contemporary programs should contain several content concentrations from which individual programs can be constructed, drawing heavily upon data produced through the individual student's diagnosis. Knowledge and understandings will be developed from work within the content area chosen for an individual's program. It is expected that a common core requirements be included in the programs of every student:

1. Administrative, organizational, political, and learning theory;
2. Technical areas of administrative practice;
3. Behavioral and social sciences;
4. Foundations of education;

5. Research;
6. Advanced technologies;
7. Ethical principles of the profession.

Clinical Components

Campus based and field based clinical experiences are essential elements of preparing educational leaders. Clinical arrangements should provide opportunities for students to compare their experiences with the knowledge base, to diagnose sources of difficulties and identify problems, to develop plans and strategies suggested by their knowledge, and to assess outcomes. Opportunities should be provided for systematic observation and participation in several field settings under the joint supervision of faculty and experienced practitioners.

Professionalization and Renewal Component

Members of the department or program should hold and encourage students to hold membership and participate actively in administrator professional organizations. These associations are vital for professional renewal of administrators and professors and for encouraging lifelong learning and continuous personal and professional improvement.

CONCLUSION

AASA recognizes the danger inherent in developing Guidelines for the Preparation of School Administrators that may vary substantially from the programs provided by some institutions. Professionalism depends on

creativity, soundly formulated innovations, and the capacity of individuals and institutions to capitalize on their unique strengths and respond effectively to unanticipated challenges. Since uniform standards, rigidly applied, may impair the flexibility that programs need to meet local or regional needs, AASA desires that these Guidelines not be used to limit program development or the expertise of given faculty.

However, the Association is equally mindful of the difficult social, economic, technical, and educational problems which we face as a Nation. Those problems, enumerated above, require the enlightened and responsible attention of all educators, for inadequacies in the training and development of the young will soon translate into burdens to be endured by generations of adults.

While AASA remains committed to providing a continuing, sustained program of professional development opportunities to its members, it recognizes the importance of thorough, initial professional training for those with the awesome responsibility of leading and managing our educational system. More than ever Leadership for Learning requires vision, dedication, technical expertise, and conceptual skills - capacities that can be stimulated and developed in soundly conceived and executed preparation programs of the depth and direction outlined above.

Therefore, AASA embraces these Guidelines as a statement reflecting both the significance and enormity of the responsibilities inherent in administering schools. The goals and competencies described here provide a benchmark to which the fully competent professional can point with pride and a younger generation of educators can aspire with confidence. Our children and society deserve nothing less.